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### MAY COVER

Young children engaging in physical activities — an important aspect of the education of the young child. This issue of the *Journal* is devoted entirely to the education of the young child.

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# Joint Conference

on

## The Education of the Young Child

CONFERENCE THEME: For All Young Children...Healthy Personalities Through Early School Experiences

Indiana State Teachers College  
Home Economics Building  
Student Union Building  
November 4-5, 1960

*Sponsored by*

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### How Do Teachers and Parents Contribute to the Development Of Healthy Personality in the Young Child?

Edward C. Shipley

Child Psychiatrist, Riley Child  
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I CONSIDER IT an honor to my profession of psychiatry and a tribute to the progress psychiatry has made over the last 25-50 years to be invited here today to address this conference. We know that the teacher, as a professional person, exerts enormous influence on personality development. Many teachers are able to solve difficult classroom problems through common sense and intuition without having special knowledge about mental health per se. Before I describe personality development let me hasten to add that no one expects the teacher to be a therapist. But like the psychiatrist: a. The better she understands herself, the better job she can do. b. The more understanding she

has of personality development the more effective she can be.

Allow me to begin the consideration of this topic by first outlining what we mean by normal personality development. Personality as I will define it is a sum total of the individuals internal and external patterns of adjustment to life. These patterns of adjustment may in part represent an unfolding of action patterns already established in the new-born infant on a constitutional basis. However, psychiatry tends to minimize this element and gives more emphasis to the concept that each of us acquires these adjustment patterns in an outgoing process of maturation. The process of maturation in-

volves several phases of repeatedly giving up earlier patterns of adjustment and taking on new ones more appropriate to the growing individual. In other words, it is not a static process.

At birth personality, if we can speak of such, is in a rudimentary form. It consists largely of instinctual drives demanding gratification. I'll call these the 1st portion of personality. These drives give the growing person no choice; he must begin the process of acquiring patterns of adjustment in order to gain some gratification of these drives without painful conflict. The drive to preserve one's own life is evidenced by the hungry infant who seeks relief of tension within himself. He wishes relief of this tension caused by hunger immediately without any regard to time or the comfort of his mother. This example demonstrates a characteristic of instinctual drives, namely: the tendency to avoid pain and obtain gratification and pleasure without regard to logic, time or the feelings of others. In time, the child must and is made aware that some control of this free expression of all his desires must be brought about in order to adjust to social life. He learns that he risks a scolding or loss of love if he soils and wets at will, if he is excessively destructive and cruel or too demanding.

Hence, a second portion of the personality is formed which meets the outside world, a part that serves as the manager or mediator between the child's inner demands and the demands of the outside world. This portion is the center for the control of impulses, for the processes of memory, judgment, reasoning and integration. It is responsible for the mental control of movement and also for the control of tension and in part for the amount of stress that the individual encounters. In theory it is called the ego. It handles inner stress or the warding off of unwelcome or improper desires by the use of various mental mechanisms of defense. Some examples are projection, identification, rationalization, repression and several others. In other words, the feeling of hate can be projected or displaced to another. Example: I do not hate him, he hates me. Instead of owning up to hatred toward a person one can identify with that person and take on some of that person's qualities and thereby no longer have need to hate him as intensely. Or a forbidden desire to show parts of one's body can be pushed from awareness by the unconscious process of repression. These are examples of how the maturing personality hopes to avoid worry or nervousness as a result of unsolved problems between what he wants, what he expects of himself and what others expect of him. I will give a few more examples later.

The ego now begins to substitute the capacity to forgo an immediate pleasure in order to insure pleasure

and to avoid pain later instead of pleasure now at any cost regardless of one's better judgment or awareness of known consequences. Finally, we come to the eventual formation of a conscience. The conscience contains the morals and ethics of the individual. By a process of a repeated parental prohibition and good and just examples the parental viewpoint is gradually taken over by the child and incorporated into the newly forming personality. The conscience, if sufficiently developed, aids the individual or his ego in his adjustment processes by causing him to feel fear, shame, disgust, embarrassment or guilt if he has released or is about to release an unacceptable impulse or thought. Later the parents place in the formation of one's conscience is taken over in part by teachers, religious workers, scout leaders, neighbors and other people important to the child. This imitation of others continues during school years, and in fact, really never ceases and plays an important role in the individual's orientation toward the social group and culture in general. It goes without saying that it is important for the child to have a sufficient relationship with someone of his own sex with whom to identify; this includes people his own age and adults.

Watch your children at play and you will see at once how they imitate your behavior. A little girl, putting her doll to bed, was heard to say, "You get to bed and stay there. I don't want to hear another word from you." In playing house children faithfully portray their parents' assets, but even more accurately their faults.

I wish to restate briefly what I have covered thus far. Personality implies adjustment. An ego and a conscience is hopefully developed with sufficient effectiveness to modify or at least screen our impulses—many of which are not acceptable to ourselves or others. Because of these inner strength we are equipped to postpone gratification and even accept substitutes at a later time.

Now let us consider the patterns of adjustment that all of us regularly use when we cope with our impulses. The various factors which contribute to personality growth can be divided into four categories. These you will recognize I have mentioned earlier: drives, the ego, environment and conscience. These four areas all interact and affect the manner in which impulses or drives are handled with behavior. As an example: There's a pretty girl in my class. Environment. I would like to kiss her. Instinct. But her boy friend is bigger and stronger than I. Ego. And kissing strange girls is wrong to do anyway. Conscience. I will mention briefly three of the more common methods of impulse management. You recall I mentioned before one of the functions of the ego is to develop and use defense mechanisms against anxiety. One method is illustrated by the child who shows a tendency to let loose or act out without



any control. He has a relatively weak conscience and his ego either finds this method acceptable or it is too weak to do anything about it. If he is angry he curses and fights and when he feels a sexual impulse this is acted out too regardless of the circumstances. A second common method of dealing with drives is through the use of reaction formation. This is a mental mechanism of defense wherein attitudes and behavior are adopted which are the opposites of impulses the individual disowns.

Example: An individual who fears expressing anger or hatred may disguise them by being polite and courteous in a very ingratiating manner. Or, the man who describes his wife perfect in all respects is suspected of harboring some negative feelings toward her which he does not wish to recognize. A third method by which a child may deal with his drives or basic urges is through the use of sublimation. The originally socially unacceptable impulse is bent from its original form into a more socially acceptable channel and discharged. Example: The child with immature exhibitionistic impulses may channel this energy into school plays.

I have now briefly sketched the beginnings of one's personality and some of its characteristics. Every infant is born with a certain potential which is individual to him. If he is fortunate he will eventually approach his maximum potential. From the moment of his birth his physical and emotional environment begins to shape him. Let us now consider some of the characteristics of a well adjusted child. 1. A child who is reasonably content and happy a majority of the time. 2. One who behaves in a manner appropriate for his age. Example: An 8 year old boy who leaves behind most of the obstinacy, rebelliousness, messiness, even sadistic behavior that characterizes much of the behavior of the child of 2 and 3. 3. One who enjoys a comfortable friendly relationship with his peers. He gets along well with children of his own age and prefers them to youngsters who are either older or younger than himself. 4. The normal child is curious and interested in his surroundings. He is not inhibited in his desire to learn. 5. His relationships with adults are pleasant and he is not fearful, rebellious or overcontrolled in their presence. 6. He is not afraid of his own feelings and is gradually gaining mastery over them. 7. He can express both tender and angry or competitive impulses in appropriate circumstances and neither emotion causes him undue anxiety. 8. At least by time of school age he behaves sufficiently as if he were one of his own sex and is content with that arrangement. For instance, the boy is masculine and the girl is feminine.

Many such children in the classroom is every teachers wish. She would then need to be far less concerned with problems of discipline and under achievement.

Such children are teachable and more of the teachers expendable energy could then be used for the teaching of skills. Examples of personality types or children who do not even begin to reach the potential that they were endowed with are legend and familiar to all of you. I will briefly discuss a few. Included are the excessively withdrawn children, often called schizoid personalities, who avoid close relations with others and show an undue preference for daydreaming. They are shy, seclusive, unsociable and introverted. Another group alternates between extremes of elation for days and sadness for days. And another: The paranoid personality. He is unduly sensitive about the attitudes and behavior of others and often builds "mountains out of mole hills." He may even believe that others wish to harm him in some way. He is critical, demanding, biased and uncompromising. At the same time he is intolerant of criticism and unable to accept suggestions. He is jealous, unadaptable and has a need to demonstrate his superiority with a "chip on the shoulder" attitude. No one here can fail to visualize such a personality and fail to predict the unhappiness he will cause himself and others.

I'll use this example to demonstrate our thinking about causes of such disturbed development. In a significant number of cases such a person comes from a family that has been severely authoritarian, harsh and cruel. Frequently, a parent openly rejects the child and shows him no tenderness and through accusations produces fear, feelings of inadequacy and a self image of "badness." His emotional needs are not met and recognized. His personality becomes warped as a result of the inharmony about him and his frustrations. He becomes filled with hatred and feelings of revenge flood his mind. Sometimes self-pity and rivalry with brothers and sisters seems to add to the development of the paranoid personality as does the presence of physical handicap some cases.

The shaping of the personality begins with the mother or her substitute. It is generally accepted that an abundant, consistent and warm "mothering relationship" must be presented to the child in order to guard against later irreversible anxiety and tension states. Essential then as a foundation for future healthy personality development, the child must have a feeling that he is wanted and enjoyed by his parents. I don't mean wanted by them as a object that might support an otherwise shaky marriage or wanted by them to serve as a channel of hostility toward each other. Many parents sometimes unknowingly fight each other by either displacing their anger onto the child or by suddenly provoking a child to misbehave. It is our theory that the newborn should be as continuously satisfied as possible in the first few months after birth

especially. Responsively gratifying infant's needs during early months will, 1. Serve to keep the infant's anxieties and tensions at a minimum. 2. Does not mean that the child is spoiled for the parent who responds to the clock rather than the behavior of the child is, from the child's point of view, not responsive at all. Yes, scheduling of infant care does give mothers more freedom and leisure but we must face the fact that certain goals of society are incompatible with the mothering process particularly in the early years. The newborn gets satisfaction from sucking, being held, fondled and spoken to by the mother. If such satisfactions are not forthcoming we will observe reactions to inadequate mothering which include refusal to suck, rigidity of muscles, periods of screaming, breath holding and constipation. Later temper tantrums are seen, a reaction to frustration. Also excessive sleep and apathy may be noted based on the premise that crying is hard work and repeatedly expending this effort without reward leads to either apathy or resignation or insecurity and anxiety. No behavior should be arbitrarily demanded of a child that does not exist in his repertoire, for a response must occur if it is to be rewarded. Rewards should be administered when the desired behavior occurs. More praise should be used with children at these times. Conversely, if punishment is indicated it too should be administered when the undesirable behavior occurs and the child should know why he was punished. Forced feeding of resentful or apathetic children makes failure to eat a way to fight back at parents. Eating no longer is a pleasure. Punishment of "bad habits" such as soiling, thumb sucking or blinking makes an insecure child more insecure. Toilet training should not be attempted until the infant is able to sit alone securely, until he has acquired at least a definite sign language, and until he has a strong positive emotional attitude toward the mother. By age of 4 in a broad sense the ego is essentially complete. He is more able to utilize the reality rather than the pleasure principle. We see the beginning development of identification with the parent of the same sex and the individual's conscience. The child is now ready for some self-imposed discipline and he can participate with others in social exchange of knowledge. He discovers that others have feelings, that he must respect the property of others, that he can make friends and that he is part of a family. Some further principles of management that all parents and teachers may use include. 1. Study the child's own needs. When we protect a child from all unpleasant experience or do anything for him that he can safely do for himself we hinder his development. 2. When trouble arises, start handling the child as if he were a little younger. 3. Make a few rules for the child in the matter of eating, sleeping and obeying reasonable requests. Consistently insist on prompt execution of these rules without

controversy or begging off. 4. Help him to make his own choices rather than make them for him. 5. As he grows older make him responsible for certain duties around the house or yard. 6. Check your own habits of emotional control. 7. Both parents should be very thoughtful about providing for their child the experience of moral and religious training in the religion of their choice. Both parents should agree and share in child rearing. 8. Remember, one act of kindness and consideration to other people is worth a thousand words in teaching children. If we curse a policeman, denounce a member of another race or belittle a teacher in the presence of a child we should not be surprised to learn that the child soon begins to have similar attitudes. 9. A child should not be frequently caressed against his wishes. 10. Proper account should be taken of the child's limited capacity for concentration and limited ability to comply depending on his age. 11. If two children are fighting the adult should not automatically decide against the more aggressive child. 12. Recognize the child's desire for being accepted, for belonging and eventually for some measure of recognition and prestige.

Frequently little is said about the father's role when such a paper is presented. I would like to add that a good father spends some time with his children almost every day. They do things with their children that the children enjoy and they don't compel a child to learn a new lesson from each new experience. They give their children a set of values not by precept alone, but by example. Lastly, they show love and respect for their wives.

Teachers are increasingly aware of the role they play in the emotional growth and mental health of their students. This role is to build upon the ego that is presented to her and offer tear down some undesirable characteristics and present more desirable ones. She must remember that many of her charges will have different backgrounds, standards and emotional temperaments than she has all of which to some extent the child has come by honestly. Most all of his motivations to behavior are really not known to the child. Therefore, the teacher cannot expect the child to perform and think totally as she does and desires. Many teachers will also come to recognize that a child's inability to do the work expected of him in school when he possesses the necessary intellectual capacity for it, his persistence in disobeying his parents and teachers, his refusal to attend school, his inability to concentrate or his frequent complaints of headaches, fatigue, and pains may be symptoms of unconscious conflicts or emotional cravings. Such conduct may be the expression of the individual's unconscious effort to secure satisfactions that are denied him through more healthy forms of con-

duct, such as an unconscious need to punish another or to avoid experiences that are unpleasant or painful to him. Therefore, this knowledge of the role played by the unconscious in the conduct of children and adults is one of the more significant contributions modern psychiatry has made to modern education. The skillful teacher makes it possible for the child to experience some individual successes. She promotes pride in accomplishments, and maintains the spark of curiosity. She teaches and demonstrates that people can be trustworthy, protecting and thoughtful of others.

I'd like to suggest to the teachers whenever possible teach the importance of feelings, the importance of communicating feelings and other mental hygiene principles. Subjects such as pros and cons of daydreaming, stealing, tardiness, etc. can be discussed in the class with the students participating. An assigned story many times depicts themes of "getting along with others and ourselves." The children can then be asked as part of their lesson assignments to express their feelings about characters in this story and why they feel that way toward them. No teacher damages a child's personality by setting limits in a fair and firm manner. Sometimes

guilt is felt over this on the part of a new teacher. All teachers should know and admit that the behavior of small children can arouse in us at times feelings of anger, fear, disgust and anxiety. No guilt should be felt for the failure to have endless patience, unfailing energy and the occasional wish to say in desperation, "What's the use." And lastly no guilt should be felt for recognizing that you have failed to reach and help some of your charges to the extent that you had hoped. Sometimes the child doesn't let you and you have nothing more to give.

In summary, I have presented some of the concepts involved in a dynamic theory of personality development. I have briefly referred to features of the child with effective and ineffective personalities. Some ideas about causes of distorted personalities were included. The importance of the mothering role was emphasized and some management principles were discussed. Lastly, some aspects of the teachers role were enlarged upon and a suggestion made that the teacher increases her knowledge of an administration of emotional first aid. All of this has been given with the knowledge that parents and teachers cannot be all things to all people.

## What Are Sound Learning Experiences for the Young Child?

**Ethel Wright Kunkle**

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**B**EFORE WE discuss "what sound learning experiences are" for young children perhaps we should explore for a bit "how do children learn?". In spite of all the research that has been done in this field we are not yet sure just how children do learn. John and Tom are in the same first grade, have the same teacher, the same I.Q., the same peer group, the same family background as nearly as it can be matched, yet John learns to read easily and quickly and Tom cannot read at all. This kind of an example helps to substantiate the theory that each child has his own unique way of organizing his learning. No two children have the same method for learning skills or facts. The question then arises, "Does the teacher really teach or does she only guide the child so that he can learn for himself? John Dewey said that children learn by doing but we know that just doing isn't enough. They have to do the right things at the right time and under the right circumstances. The teacher must know how to plan her program and how

to guide each child through learning experiences that are best for him at the time. Research has indicated that children learn little of what they hear or see unless they do something about it. Teachers realize that no experience is educative unless it contributes to a knowledge of pertinent ideas, understandings or facets. Subject matter is not learned or at least retained in separate little boxes which cannot be used in life situations. The value of the experience is determined by the way the teacher can help the pupil to interact between himself and his environment. Dr. C. T. MacSwain of Northwestern University says that teaching a child is like the old adage, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink".

Not too many years ago we were of the opinion that children didn't really learn until their formal education began. Even if they went to Nursery School or Kindergarten they didn't learn anything—whatever they did there was just play. I am afraid that there are a good



many people who still feel the same way. We know now, however, that a baby begins to learn almost the minute he is born. From the time he is gently placed in the crib in the new born nursery his learning begins. When the teacher begins to teach him, or to help him to learn, is another story but we do know that what he learns before he gets into his first group whether it is Nursery School—Kindergarten or First Grade has tremendous impact upon how he adjusts and what he learns in these first early group situations.

What are sound learning experiences for the young child and how can we help him to take advantage of them? We are beginning to realize at last that young children do not learn much in large groups. The real beginning that is basic and that becomes a part of the child is learned individually or in small groups. The assumption that all 30 or 35 Kindergarten or First Grade children are ready to learn the same thing at the same time is false. We know from many studies in the field of Child Development that each child has his own rate of growth, his own built-in time table or rate of maturation. Because of this, we must have many activities going on at the same time, many centers of interest so that children can find situations to meet their own needs, situations where they can have experiences and solve problems and have learnings that will become a part of them. The teacher no longer chooses who will go to the blocks, who will go to the doll corner, who will paint etc., keeping careful track of who has been there yesterday or the day before. The children must be free to choose their own activity with the teacher giving individual guidance where or when it is necessary. I observed one small kindergarten boy who went to the blocks for eight days. He took out about the same number every day and looked to be building about the same kind of a structure but it was never completed—he carefully took it apart and put it away each day. On the eighth day he was working especially diligently when he suddenly stood up with a great look of satisfaction and ran to get the teacher. "Look quick," he said, "I have done it". His achievement was the careful placing of two curved blocks converging from a rectangle so they would stay in place without falling—perfect balance. This was problem solving, this was geometry, this was concentration, this was persistence, this was satisfaction in work well done, this was a completion of an idea, this was learning, this was perhaps a future engineer at work. He moved from this satisfying experience, by himself, into a small group of his peers and they explored and experimented with many things in their Kindergarten environment.

The Kindergarten and Primary program must be set up so that children have sound learning experiences like this one frequently. Jane discovered the prism that the

teacher had hung in the window. She spent one hour and twenty three minutes with it—she put it in the sun, in the shade, on the floor, climbed on the window seat and held it as high as she could get it. She made yellow lights, purple lights, she showed it to her friends, she took it outside, she talked about it to her teacher, when her mother came she showed it to her and explained in simple child like language how it worked. A future scientist?—perhaps, or maybe just a child who had found an environment where her curiosity could be satisfied and knowledge of the world around her broadened and made a part of herself. These are the kinds of experiences that make children grow and stretch their learnings. These are reading readiness experiences—not the dull work book which is ill suited to a five year or six year olds needs or to the individual differences of children. We need to make our nursery schools, kindergartens, and primary grades more alive with materials and experiences. We need to break away from the stereotyped programs that we had had for thirty years. Why do we think that a work period should always end at 9:30 or 9:50 and all the toys and materials be put away? Do juice, music, stories, rest and outdoor play always have to be at the same time and done in the same way or should we have them at all? Toys, equipment and experiences are the same all year except for the holidays that come along. I sometimes wonder what the Kindergarten would do if America should suddenly banish all holidays.

One should not just see growth in the children but growth in the programs as the year progresses. We must begin to prepare our children to live in a kind of world that we cannot even imagine. They need to know how to meet new situations, how to deal with their peers, how to accept responsibility, how to solve problems, how to assume responsibility for their own actions and how to seek knowledge for themselves—not to sit and have it poured into them—most of it will spill on the outside anyway. These things are much more important than knowing how to scrape a paint brush on the side of a can so it won't drip, how to use paste so your picture isn't soiled or your fingers sticky, how to pile the blocks so they won't fall, how to cut on the line, how to keep your place or not read ahead in the first reader and many others that you could name. Children learn these things anyway and usually much better and much faster if by themselves and by experimentation.

If each child can be allowed to have the happiest and fullest life possible in the Nursery School, the Junior Kindergarten, and the Senior Kindergarten each at its own level he will be more than ready for first grade, especially if he enters a first grade that has an individualized reading program where each child can go along at his own speed. Dr. Ethel Thompson, direc-



tor of the kindergarten section of the N. E. A. recently told a group of Wisconsin Kindergarten teachers that no group experience should be a preparation for the next. The Nursery School should not be a preparation for Kindergarten,—Kindergarten should not be a preparation for First Grade. She said that if the child lived the fullest life he could during each school year and had as many sound learning experiences as he could during one given year he would just naturally be ready for the next group. She repeated this idea so that everyone would understand.

If we are giving children sound learning experiences we must bring more materials into the classroom for the children to work with and experiment with. We must learn to make more use of the everyday environment that is around us. One first grade teacher I know in the fall had noticed the kindergarten children's interest in leaves and the things they did with them decided that when she got this group in the fall this would be a good place to start. Shortly after school opened the children went for a walk and talked about the trees in the neighborhood. With her help, they "adopted" a tree and decided to go two days each week to watch it and to see if there were any changes. They watched it until every leaf had fallen. This was a wonderful lesson in natural science but they also learned about keeping a chart, the natural order of things, and how to find out more about the things that interested them. A few

children carried this over into the spring and watched the leaves come out—this life cycle, not only of the tree, but of much of nature was learned.

In summary then let us say that a sound learning experience for a child is one in which he actively participates, one in which he extends his knowledge of the world about him, one in which the experience becomes a part of him and of his whole life, one in which his own thinking process is stretched, and one in which his concept of himself has been improved.

In conclusion let me read to you an excerpt from the well known Indian Philosopher, Kahil Gibran.

Then said a teacher, Speak to us of Teaching.

And he said:

No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom, but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.

## The Future of the Young Child: Parents and Teachers Accept the Challenge

**Elizabeth Mechem Fuller**

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**I**N SPEAKING of the young child, I have no crystal ball (and it is undoubtedly fortunate we cannot see the future). In any case, it is easier to take the future in small doses than all at once!

Most speakers, especially after-luncheon speakers, begin their presentations with a story (allegedly funny). On the dubious supposition, then, that three stories will give me three times as good a start, I shall tell three.

(1) An officer newly assigned to the Pentagon was given an office which he was appalled to discover was the anteroom to the men's restroom. However, after six months, he decided that he was really the luckiest man in the Pentagon, because he was stationed in the only

room in the building which everyone entered knowing exactly what he wanted to do and how to do it.

(2) A school superintendent was asked what he would like to be if he were not a superintendent.

He replied, "A conductor on a train."

"Why?"

"Because everyone who gets on knows where he wants to go and I'd get to tell them where to get off!"

(3) The kindergarten class had a baby rabbit. "Is it a girl or a boy?" someone asked.

A super-sophisticated boy piped up, "I know how to find out." The worried teacher wondered what was to come next. The boy's method: "Let's vote."

Now, what do these stories have to do with the Future of the Young Child?

They all three point up a frightening state of bewilderment and confusion in the world today—in government, in school leaders, in children.

And all of the answers are not to be found by retreating to the restroom, going to work on the railroad, or by voting. In thinking of the young child's future, if all of the uninformed and confused vote, and then we feel more secure simply because more people have said it is so—we are in for trouble. The majority can be wrong. (What a horrible thought during this election week!) Our chief challenge is, of course, not to deny the vote, but to inform and to try to deconfuse as many as possible.

In my opinion there are two areas where our job seems most overpowering.

The "Elvis Presley Value System." I hasten to insert here that many consider this young man talented, but it is probably legitimate to wish that he did other things with whatever talent he has. I must admit here also that I granted my adolescent daughter's request last summer and drove forty miles out of our way on a trip to visit his home and photograph his "fantastic gate." Do you know about that gate? "We" gathered pebbles from his drive-way and leaves from the tree outside his bedroom window. Contrast his acclaim and material rewards, though, with those of other persons in other fields in the United States.

Friends returning from a trip to the Scandinavian countries told of a long colorful collegiate parade with the first convertible bearing the top student. Could it happen here? It seems to me that it probably couldn't.

Another illustration about values. There is a professor at the University of Chicago by the name of Getzel who has been doing a lot of research on the gifted. He has been trying to find out what the values systems are of parents and teachers and children—particularly those in the area of the gifted, the ones who are brighter academically. What they found out was this: Parents described the characteristics of gifted children accurately (they knew what they were), but when asked to rank the characteristics in the order of those they most preferred in their own children, they shied away from the very ones which discriminated the gifted, especially the gifted creatives. They preferred "social popularity," happily adjusted, and similar traits. Teachers tended more to value in pupils the same characteristics as distinguish the gifted, but they, too, were hard on the truly creatives, especially those non-conformists with an off-beat sense of humor. Children's values were more like their parents than their teachers.

They valued traits in themselves and their peers, which do not distinguish the creative gifted.

In this study the gifted youngsters were divided into two groups: Those who were in the top twenty per cent in giftedness but not in the top twenty per cent creative, and those who were in the top twenty per cent creative but not in the top twenty per cent gifted. They were all gifted youngsters, but some were more gifted than others academically and less creative, and some were more creative and less gifted intellectually.

There was one example in the report which Dr. Getzel made which I thought was just choice and I want to repeat it for you. This was an experiment in which he used the projective technique of showing a picture, and this happened to one of the McClelland pictures. He asked the youngsters what they saw in the picture. This particular picture showed a man reclining in an airplane seat. That's all, just the way the observer in general would describe it. Now here is the response to that card from the high intellect with low creativity, relatively speaking.

Top twenty per cent I.Q., but not top twenty per cent creative: "Mr. Smith is on way home from business trip or conference. He was very successful. He is very happy and he is thinking about his wonderful family and how glad he will be to see them again. He can picture airport with Mrs. Smith and three children all there welcoming him home again."

Top twenty per cent creativity, but not top twenty per cent I.Q.: "This man is flying home from Reno where he's just won a divorce from his wife. He couldn't stand to live with her anymore, he told the judge, because she wore so much cold cream on her at night that her head would skid across the pillow and hit him in the head. He is now sitting there contemplating a new skid-proof face cream!"

I'd like to give you a second example of the difference. A stimulus-picture of a man usually perceived as working late:

High I.Q., but not high creative: "There's ambitious Bob, down at the office at 6:30 in the morning. Every morning it's the same. He's trying to show his boss how energetic he is. Now, thinks Bob, maybe he'll give me a raise for all my extra work. The trouble is that Bob has been doing this for the last three years and boss still hasn't given him a raise. He'll come in at nine, not even noticing Bob has been there so long, and poor Bob won't get his raise."

High creative, but not high I.Q.: "This man has just broken into this office of a new cereal company. He's a private eye employed by a competitor firm to find out the formula that makes the

cereal bend, sag, and sway! After a thorough search of the office he comes upon what he thinks is the correct formula. He is now copying it. It turns out that it was the wrong formula and the competitor's factory blows up. Poetic justice!"

There was a little side-light on the study of teachers which I thought was worth repeating here to you. And this is that teachers, by and large, can take and love the gifted child, so long as his creativity score is not very high. In other words, they tend to value conforming gifted youngsters, rather than the truly creative gifted youngsters.

Now, it seems to me that one point comes out very clearly here. Most of us can take these high intellects without too much trouble, but this off-beat kind of thing is something which is in many places harder to live with.

I would like to refer you to Professor Guilford's work. He has come up with a relatively new idea about how to classify people into two categories. One of them he calls the convergent and the other the divergent. And they're just what they mean. We tend to fall into these two classes. The convergents are the conformers. They tend always to be focusing to be like somebody else. The divergents are those who go every which way and come out sometimes with something highly creative and sometimes just disorganized. Guilford offers the thesis, and I think this is one of the commitments which I would like to leave with you today, that we need these divergents and we need them badly in this day and age. If there is anything that we can do in the future which will help us, it seems to me it is to get this balance between the convergents and the divergents. This business of which type you are begins at a rather early age. I was thinking this morning when Dr. Kunkle was talking about the alternate ages 3, 5, 7 and 4, 6, 8 that these alternating behavior patterns suggests that it is right at this fourth year we think, "Oh, how noisy they are!" and, "Oh, will they ever again be so that they can be taught in a group?" that pressure to conform is being exerted on these children. Then, can we be sure that complacency at five is all development, or are these children reflecting their acceptance of a convergent pattern?

Look at Richard and Jane at kindergarten easels: Jane paints painstakingly, neatly—a spotless smock—a serious face. Her painting—a well-defined house with windows, door, a chimney, flowers in a straight row. Richard paints in broad seemingly careless, sloppy sweeps—what he is painting is anybody's guess—his smock a mess, paint on end of his nose and in his ears (you know the type). Jane walks over to Richard and hands on hips, says, "Richard, how many times must I tell you not to waste paint!" (Teachers little helper

type). The teacher walks over, and looks at Jane's painting, and in her best style of pedagogy (which says, "Try to compliment the good, rather than to stress the poor.") says to Jane, "What a neatly done picture! Look at the careful use of colors, etc. etc." She (teacher) has not yet spied, on a bench nearby, a McCall's magazine cover, which Jane has copied, even to the choice of color for the flowers. Jane says, "Yes, Mrs. Wilson, I did it exactly right!"

Richard, seeming on the verge of tears, moves nearer to the teacher and asks, "Would you like to hear about mine? Hesitantly, she answers, "Why, yes, Richard, is your picture supposed to be something?" Richard beams, "Oh, yes, this (a blob of black) is a dark cloud. This (a smaller blob of yellow) is the bright sun. This (blue dots) and this (many colored area) is rain and a rainbow which explains why a black cloud and a bright sun are in the sky together. Oh, teacher, isn't it simply beautiful?"

Convergence (Jane) and divergence (Richard) in action! And it takes both kinds of people! We must be sure that we value both, even though it is frequently much more difficult to live with one than the other.

We tend to honor the convergent (conforming) more than the divergent (rugged individualist) in our society. This was not true 50 years ago. It is true now. Will this persist in the future? We will get what we value, you can be certain!

I mentioned that there were two areas which seem overpowering in the direction we have to take. The first one had to do with what is the value system—what are we going to value in the future—and the second one is somewhat more troublesome in many ways. It is the faddish criticism of philosophies of education and methods of education which we are getting from all sides. The drum beating for first one thing and then another: Science, mathematics, guidance, physical fitness, phonics, foreign language down in the lower grades. Now, I believe that those of us who are in the behavioral science are short-changed when all of these fads come along. These crash programs cause us, most of us, to weep for our equilibrium.

There is a term which is being bandied about a great deal in early childhood education and psychology at present called homeostasis. Homeostasis is the equilibrium-seeking mechanism which operates as a law of life. We seem to go off balance in our hope for a well-rounded broad-sampling for younger children every time some pressure group or subject matter area fights for its comfort, and homeostasis is seen in a much narrower sense than was intended. Why does this concern us?

We know a lot of things that should help us to be

able to combat these things, but too frequently we aren't asked. We just have things imposed from above or without. We know, for example, that if children do not sample widely of everything before they are ten years of age, they never do it again. The classic studies in this area, of course, are those of Lehman and Witty which also show how people's lives narrow with advancing age. We also know that sampling has to be more than a mere taste. We know that people have to have a broad sample to the extent that they can do a thing well enough to know whether they like it. So we have plenty of reasons for resisting this narrow concentration on reading or writing or arithmetic, or any one thing. We know, too, that most of the literature on the advantage of sampling in the early years has been concentrated in a few areas, for example, the Jersild work at Columbia on music. Now there is some new information on physical fitness and sports which shows this same principle. We must keep this base broad to provide a broad sampling in the early years.

These two mountainous shapes on our horizon—value systems, ephemeral fads and pressures—require two strategies, as I see it:

1. *Vigorous leadership—personified by you who are here today, interested in these problems.* There is, however, a rather strong suspicion that the very same traits, which make us the best teachers of young children, keep us out of leadership roles! (Democratic, easy-going, gentle, behind-the-scenes). We must get on the offensive, not sit back and watch the reverse order impact of every educational criticism ultimately come to rest upon us. Dr. Ethel Wright Kunkle mentioned this same point last night. The colleges, looking for a scapegoat, point fingers at the high schools; they in turn blame the junior high; which censures the elementary and of course we have no place to point or to run! The order truly needs to be reversed in improving education. We need to develop the best possible early childhood education based upon all that we know about growth and development, content in subject matter, teaching methods, and human relations. And then—the upper levels need to build on this.

Now, I would like to call your attention to the little document which I have just done for the NEA called "Values in Early Childhood Education." For it I did make a rather exhaustive search of the research, and I found some 280 researches trying to prove the worth of some part of early childhood education. And overwhelmingly this opinion came to me. Too many people tackle this from too short a range of time. They tackle it from the standpoint of, for example, can kindergarten children read better in first grade than non-kindergarten children? And this kind of thing. As leaders,

we must be wary of short range attempts to prove the worth of any segment of education.

2. *Know what is being done and has already been done in research on young children.* This comprises the very best ammunition we can carry for meeting all comers—for defending what we do, so long as we keep up to date on what is known.

I would offer the suggestion, and I feel this very strongly, that we do have knowledge of the growth and development of little children beautifully documented. I don't believe there is any other segment in human life on which there has been as much research, as well done, as thoroughly documented, so that if we take a long range view we can be quite secure in what we say. I'm going to pick out three or four of the generalizations at random. First of all we know, for example, that children at all ages have fears. But we know that some of them are decreasing with age and some of them are increasing with age. So that any given time you may have to say to a parent or to another teacher, "This child is growing because he has a new fear." In other words, youngsters have to have enough sense and be old enough to fear certain things. So we have a lot of information about fears which is very, very helpful when you need it for any counseling purpose.

We know also that we can use materials developmentally. I call your attention to a brand new brochure just off the press on block building of NEA. One of the little incidents connected with that I would like to tell you about. I happened to be on the research committee at Ohio University. This committee is vested with responsibility for dealing out all research funds for the university. Miss Starkes wanted \$100 to take some beautiful pictures and also to have an art student come in to do some rather elaborate sketches. When this request came in to the research committee, mostly chemists and physicists, mathematicians and so forth, I wish you could have heard them hoot, "We should be spending the taxpayers' money for kids' blocks!" There was just one other social scientist on the committee, a man in sociology. He was nice enough to help me shut them up long enough to tell them the sense of this. They gave this \$100. This is part of this interpretation process which you find needs to be done in all circles. They gave the \$100 and I understand four of them have bought the brochure now.

The last point I want to mention is that our perceptions and manner of depicting the things around us follow an orderly sequence. We know that we perceive at all ages, but that we perceive differently at different ages, and we depict the things around us in terms of what age we are and in terms of what is important to us at the time.



What I have here is a picture of the Goodenough Draw-A-Man Test. Many of you know this scale, but you probably have not seen all of these examples. This is a way of getting a very rough estimate of intelligence in a non-language way. This particular chart takes children from a mental age of three up in this corner across the top and then across the bottom to a mental age of eight. These are samples of men drawn by children at those ages which are typical of most children. No one knows why but when youngsters have a mental age between three-and-a-half and four they put the navel on a drawing. It doesn't matter whether they are Eskimos or Chinese or Mexicans or what; this comes in at this time. So it is not a conceptional thing, necessarily, but this is a change that comes about with age. In the six-year-old we have this phenomenon of the floating buttons without anything to hang them on. This is also for some peculiar reason the age when they fill in, make a solid surface there. This is a systematic thing. The only thing I would like to stress in connection with this is that there is a clear cut, irreversible trend in development. When you see what stage a youngster is in, you can be sure where he has been and where he is going. The process is irreversible. Children proceed at different rates but always in the same direction. This then is our best key to future understanding.

I would like to illustrate that even when you do know what these norms are or what happens at given ages, you are still not mistake-proof. I don't have to tell teachers who work with children this. I'd like to tell you an anecdote or two here to illustrate this point. This happened in a kindergarten. Those of you who have read Neith Headley's book, "Education in the Kindergarten," know that in the first edition of that book she had an illustration of a meeting when the youngsters talked about planning a kindergarten garden in the spring. They had talked and talked and she thought everything was completely clear with the youngsters. Then she said, "Does anyone else have a suggestion?"

And one of the little boys spoke up and said, "Teacher, I have a whole basket of worn out bulbs at home which I can bring for the garden." This happened in Miss Headley's own kindergarten. Here she saw an example of underestimating the degree of understanding that these youngsters had about something she thought she had taught.

When I was up in Minnesota visiting the kindergartens all over that part of the country, I could hardly believe my eyes and ears one day when I went to a kindergarten way out in the country in a small town. They were talking about planning a garden in exactly the same way. The teacher said, "Are there any questions?". One little boy held up his hand and said "Teacher, down in our basement I have a basket of worn out bulbs. Can I bring them?" I thought, "Surely this doesn't happen twice in exactly the same fashion!" The children laughed, the teacher smiled, but this little boy was not so easily daunted. He got up from his chair, pointed his finger at the group and said, "Now you listen to me. My daddy read in George Luxton's column, that's the nature editor, that if you outline your flower beds with worn out bulbs then the rabbits won't eat up the tender shoots."

Now, here were two circumstances which looked identical. In one case the teacher was over-estimating, and in the other case she was underestimating. This is what I mean, by saying we are not mistake-proof even when we do know the norms.

We must give every child the kind of future which is his birthright—as much education as he can absorb and as much friendly understanding as we can give. I think our greatest challenge is being able, whether we are parents or teachers or administrators, to take children as they are and work with them take them as far as we can, but not to force them always to converge and conform as they grow. They challenge us, indeed, and will continue to do so in the future.

## Panel Discussion: HOW DO WE MAKE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN WORK FOR US IN PLANNING SOUND LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

### WHAT ARE CHILDREN LIKE?

Ethel Wright Kunkle,

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisc.

We tend to categorize children, which is bad. But to make our discussion easier, I'm going to categorize them a little bit.

An age level reaches way below and way above. If we talk about four-year-olds we are really talking

about something that goes down to three-and-a-half to three even to two-and-a-half or up to four-and-a-half to five, even up to six. In this discussion we're going to stick to age levels and let's start with looking at these age levels very briefly.

What is a three-year-old-like anyway? There's really nothing lovelier than a two-year-old, but we can't talk about him today. But there's really nothing lovelier than a three-year-old. The threes seem to come into their own, but they still have that lovely kind of baby

looks in their eyes. They're sweet, they're easy, they're pliable. I don't think one can have any more joy in the world than teaching a three-year-old, and I think there is just something wonderful about three-year-olds. They get under your skin somehow. They're a little something off by themselves.

You do wonder if you have to move into the four-year-old group next year what can have happened to them. All of a sudden sweet, innocent, babyish looking children become noisy, aggressive, dirty, assertive, and you know if you go into the school building you never need to stop and ask anyone, "Where are the four-year-olds?" You just tune your ears and you walk to where the most noise is and you know that you've picked up the four-year-old group. They just are like this. They're exciting too. They don't want to have anything from you. They don't need a teacher really because they are so eager to move and do what they want to do that they really can get along by themselves. I think it's rather interesting that many people call the four-year-olds the adolescents of the pre-school period. He feels, you know, that he's independent, and he doesn't want too many adults to tell him anything. This just sort of fits into the pattern.

As the teacher of the five-year-olds looks at the four-year-olds he thinks, "Am I going to get that noisy outfit next year? What will I do with them?" She is so surprised the next year, and she wonders "What was the matter with them or with their teacher? They're not noisy at all. They're wonderful. They listen to what I say. They move around in groups. They play together. They're very realistic. They're wonderful. They're eager. Why I can't believe that these were the little noisy things that were in that room next door last year!" The five-year-old is a really exciting person to work with. He wants a lot of knowledge, he looks toward things, he explores, he starts something and he finishes it. He's really a pretty wonderful youngster.

The six-year-old is not the easiest child to live with. He's grown up now. He's going to accomplish all the things there are to accomplish in this world the very first year he's in first grade. I think public opinion helps him to get this kind of an attitude because everybody says, "Now, you're in school. Now you've dropped all

this baby stuff. You have to begin to grow up." And he seems to think he does. It's rather a painful process at times, but the six-year-old has so many things to do besides learning to read. He has to learn to co-operate. He has to learn to sit still for longer periods than six-year-olds really are supposed to sit still. You may have a problem keeping the six-year-old in line the first part of the year, because he still would like to hang on to some of the five-year-old characteristics. But social pressure somehow tells him that he can't be this way; he has grown up. So you find this little six-year-old in a kind of transition period. He is torn between being a little child and being more grown up.

The seven-year-old is rather a joy again. After living through this year of six, the seven-year-old becomes resourceful, becomes helpful, really independent, really eager to do everything the teacher wants him to do. We may not talk about teacher's pet any more, but they used to when I was in school. All seven-year-olds are like this. They want to glow in your eyes. If they can just wave at you, this is all they need. They have this feeling about the adult that is rather nice.

Now we'll finish up with the eight-year-old because this was to cover the primary. The eight-year-old knows everything. He could really quit school at this age; he knows all about everything. And if you think he doesn't just watch him by himself when he's not really forced, and you'll find him in the library pouring over the encyclopedia. He wants all kinds of knowledge about everything. If you want to see how stupid you are, just talk about the space age or rockets or pre-historic animals to a third grader. You'll find out how much he knows. Of course, the thing is, he's willing to tell you. This is one of the things that makes him a little difficult. He's willing to tell his parents too. And this sometimes gets to be a problem. He'll tell you, but he doesn't want you to tell him. This is an age when he wants to teach his own answers. This is a truly exciting age to teach. This is when the teacher really needs to stop teaching and guide the children into finding their own ways. This is what the eight-year-old wants. He wants to seek a lot of knowledge for himself. But the teacher has to give him the places and the ways to seek.

## DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS IN LEARNING

*Hazel Hart, School of Education, Butler University*

All adults who work with young children need to keep in mind certain basic understandings about learning. I think we need to recognize there are general development patterns that exist with different rates of

growth and ways of learning which make each child a unique person. An informed teacher knows the significance of these differences and applies her program of instruction with this in mind. She should certainly keep in mind the basic principles. For instance, growth is continuous, but it goes along at various rates of speed. Human growth is irregular. One phase of growth may spurt as another progresses slowly. One phase of

growth may be followed by another that is totally different. Teachers should provide amply for children to participate in activities then, which are conducive to their continuous growth whether it is proceeding with slow, average, or accelerated speed. As growth proceeds in orderly sequence, each step is built on the previous one. To guide the learning of children the teacher must understand these phases thoroughly, and the range of reasonable expectancy of children of various age levels.

The sequence of growth is recognized in, of course, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. An illustration of the sequence of growth in children relating to each other would be perhaps: (1) The child watches others first. (2) He is interested in them; he begins to interfere with what they're doing; he reaches out and grabs. (3) He plays alone with interest; (4) He plays near others while he converses and calls their attention to him. (5) He works and plays in small groups for increasingly longer periods of time.

The importance then of recognizing the stages of development and accepting each stage as a preliminary to the next cannot be over-emphasized. Each developmental task must be achieved in proper sequence if the child is to be successful with later tasks. Teachers should accept each child at his developmental level, realizing the child's interests, and knowing what he will do at that particular level. The teacher must guide the child step by step in development sequence. Various rates of growth and various capacities should neither be penalized nor rewarded but accepted as something that is desirable and perfectly natural. Children are born with strong drives of curiosity to manipulate, to explore, to construct, to create, to communicate. Incessant activity is an out-standing trait of all young children. The child learns how to do many things by himself, thus increasing his self-respect and his personal adequacy. He must be shown how to do many things, and then he must be given an opportunity to do things for himself.

Keep in mind that children learn many things simultaneously. They learn attitudes, understandings, habits, and skills; all of these are developed concurrently. A human being develops as a whole. I think what we need to keep in mind is that children grow all the time, all over. A child does not learn facts, attitudes, or behavior separately. Each involves a complex combination of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. There are many factors which influence learning: health and physical condition, interests, emotional and social adjustment, home environment, economic status of the family, what the child thinks of himself, and what he believes others think of him. All of these factors are

significant in determining a child's success in learning. Acceptance and approval by his parents is especially significant. In the past it was deeply felt that intelligence was thought to be the only factor of importance to receptive learning. Now educators are coming to realize that children may be so preoccupied with something inside themselves that learning may be impossible. Teachers may have to do a job compensating for unsatisfied needs children bring to school. These children may be so bothered about how they're being accepted that they cannot learn. Emotions are all tied up with learning.

A child learns more readily when there is a purpose and he feels a need for a specific kind of learning. When a child sees a relationship between what he's learning and how he can use it, he attacks the task with much more vigor and much more interest. Of course, interests, according to his doing, are fine symptoms of growing power, and they represent capacities. Learning is changed behavior. A test of the learner is in changed behavior.

Children seek understanding of the world about them by investigating, by manipulating, and experimenting with the coming objects. Opportunities must be provided to use books, a wide variety of pictures and materials, in life-like situations and activities. If questions are answered clearly and directly in an interesting and enthusiastic manner, then children's natural curiosity will be satisfied and will be kept alive, and it will continue to be active. Children should delve deeply into the information of interest to them at their stage of development. Developing questing children should be our goal.

Children's continued progress in school is conditioned by the maintenance of their zest for learning. I remember last year visiting a kindergarten. A little boy came up to the teacher and he said, "Where is that book that you used yesterday in telling the story?" She went to the desk; she picked out the book and held it down at his eye level as she turned to the table of contents, ran her finger down the page and ran her finger across the page and showed him the page number. Then she carefully turned to the page and said, "Here it is." He took it to the library center, sat down at the table, and looked at this book. I couldn't help but wonder what he was thinking because he was just looking at the black and white symbols. Then suddenly his finger slipped, the book closed, and his place was lost. He ran back to the teacher and said, "I've lost it." So she went through again very patiently holding the book down, opening it, and showing him the page, and turning the page. Again he returned to the library center, sat down, and was still looking at the book when I left. I thought what a wise teacher, what a

wonderful thing that she had capitalized on this learning opportunity.

We must be highly selective and critical of experiences which children have. Good living experiences

## **BASING LEARNING ON INTERESTS**

*Caroline McCullough, Head Nursery School Teacher,  
Dept. of Child Development and Family Life,  
Purdue University*

I am very glad to start there and to go on with some of the ideas that have been expressed before, but bring what I have to say into the age level that I work with; the three, four, and five-year-olds. The thing that I'm thinking about is really working up interest on the part of the children and basing our learning experiences on those interests rather than following just the stereotyped program that we so often are inclined to get into.

All of us do tend to lose valuable opportunities for picking up interests of children. The child asks a question. We may just answer the question or make a comment. We may make a comment that time, but we just let the matter drop. Actually, we can provide very interesting experiences. This would be true certainly in nature and science because constantly children are asking questions, making comments, showing an interest in something. For example, a child might see a spider and say, "Oh, there's a spider. I'll step on it." He steps on it, and the spider's gone. That's the end of the spider and also the end of what could be a very worth while experience. But instead of letting the child step on it, why not say, "Instead of stepping on it, let's watch it and see what it does." That happened on a playground just recently. The spider then did right away start to make a web from the group up an inclined board, and the children then had a very interesting time watching that under a magnifying glass to see it more clearly.

## **HOW DO WE MAKE OUR KNOWLEDGE WORK?**

*Helen Sornson, Professor of Education,  
Ball State Teachers College*

Our topic, "How We Make Our Knowledge Work," assumes that we have a kind of knowledge, and in a sense that we have a kind of philosophy that we want to put into action. This isn't easy. It has been

must be provided. We must seek the truth about what we are doing to, doing with, and doing for children to help them live and enjoy each day fully.

Then we sang songs about spiders and read stories about spiders and there was really quite an interest there. That led on to the other interests. Then the children stopped stepping on ants and began watching them.

There are certainly all sorts of possibilities, and that would be true not only of science but in many other parts of the program. How many of us feel that music has to come at music time? Maybe the child sings at some other time, perhaps when he's playing. There are so many opportunities for music, and a teacher may encourage that when she sees a child singing, and she starts singing along or encouraging another child to sing. Thus, singing may be going on at many times other than just at the set music time. Then if you're watching you may have a child in the group who was singing something that really is original with him. You can pick that up and you encourage other children to sing songs that they thought up all by themselves.

There are certainly many possibilities with language, too. We know that children, especially the four-year-olds, are very interested in language and are beginning to pick up all sorts of silly words, sounds, and so forth. This can be channelled into something that is creative, too. They may make up nonsense riddles, so that they're creating something that is going to be acceptable. Also, we can encourage the children to make up stories.

There is a great deal that we can do in picking up the interest on the part of the children instead of feeling that we do have to start with the same sort of thing that we've done year after year.

said many times that we know more than we can do. Recently in my reading, I found this comment, "You have to be born every day if you're going to make your knowledge work." That is, each day you have to be able to step out on something that you didn't do before. There are lots of things that we know how to do and they sound really easy, don't they. But doing needs a kind of courage that says, "I'm going to do it differently today." We've known for a long time that we



cannot learn for other people. But we go on teaching as though we believed we could. The child has to learn it for himself, and the teacher's job is that of figuring it out: How does this child put things together? How does he seem to try it on and fit it for himself? We're beginning to know a lot of things about how he sees things, and the relationship this has to how he learns. How does it look when you're four years old? How do you tell how something looks to a child?

Children need to try on life, and that is what they're doing all along the way. When they're one and two and three, they're trying on life. See that when a little girl or little boy is playing in the corner that they're trying on life. When they play the baby, and they use the bottle, they're trying to figure out just what it is that's different about being a baby and just being little. It must be something kind of nice because Mother gives so much attention to that new one.

It seems to me that the teacher's job is to stand still and listen, and watch. Somewhere along the line somebody taught me that the teacher's job is always to talk and to be teaching and putting out a lot of facts. But I'm discovering that the wise teachers are teachers who are standing still and getting cues from children. Not only are interests picked up, but attitudes that children have, misconceptions that children have, false unworkable knowledge that children have, strange pictures of themselves as human beings. I heard someone say, "Don't just do something, stand there." This is a good thing to write down inside of you so that you can recall it once in a while, and you won't feel lazy. We don't need to feel guilty about some of these things if we stand still and watch. What is it this youngster is telling me, what am I learning about him, and what is it he's trying to learn? I know a little boy who came to our schools this year who spoke only Spanish. For the nine weeks that our schools have been in session now he has worked puzzles almost all kindergarten time. The teachers go and sit down near him, and I've noticed now that the children sit down near him and make comments and carry on conversation with him. He's learning that we value him. We talk to him. Day before yesterday, when I was in that kindergarten, I said to him, "Where are you going now?" He said, "Outdoors." I said, "What are you going to do?" "Play." You see what he's been learning from us. I expect the children have been really busy teaching him.

We've known for a long time that children have to feel that they have importance. How do you use this idea in planning your curricula for your program of learning experiences? It seems to me that when planning each night we should say to ourselves, "Here's Frank, and John, and Mary. What are the things I'm hoping

they will begin to learn? What are they learning?" We use this knowledge that they have to feel successful, that they have to feel valued, that they have to feel important, and we plan in terms of that the night before. We plan in terms of individuals and in terms of the group. We have to ask ourselves, too, once in a while, since we know people learn best when they are appreciated and valued and loved: "Why is it hard to like this one? And some of the time it is hard to like this one because he has so many of the characteristics that I had when I was little. Sometimes it is hard to like this one because I don't quite understand him or because he seems to be getting by with everything. Why is it so hard to give attention to those who need it so badly? Well, we've known this for a long time. We try to think in terms of his interests, in terms of the behavior he's showing us, in terms of the skills he already has, in terms of the content we would like to have available to him, in terms of the books that there are. We plan experiences in terms of the things we know about him. He ought to be feeling success.

I know a boy who has read sport stories for almost an entire year. As I watched him, I realized this was a place for him to consolidate himself. He was interested in the content, but he needed to feel that he had a corner on this. He knew he could be successful. His teacher was the kind who believed that if he chose a book, then he ought to read it. It was immoral to bring it back without reading it. So he never took a book he wasn't sure he could read. We've known this.

A senior student came to me the other day and she said, "Miss Sornson, I'm an 'A' student. I've been an 'A' student all the way through school. I never knew how to read a book without studying it." We've known for a long time that we don't have to study all things. You read and enjoy and appreciate. There are many reasons for reading.

We've known for a long time that children want to learn to read. Our job is to find the steps and the ways. A little kindergartener sat for a half hour looking at a story, and his face was just lighted up. I said to him, "My, that must have been an interesting story. Would you read it to me?" He said, "Well, you're the one that can read." Not willing to be outdone by a five-year-old, I read the story. He listened attentively and he smiled graciously and when I got all through he said, "Well, is that what it says?" We've known for a long time that children had ideas, and we thought we knew what they thought, but we don't always. I think all the time, "Have I stimulated your thinking?" Will we use what we know in planning a program?

## TEACHERS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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Teachers are important, and in order to do the things that we want done, we must have good ones. They are hard to find. What do we look for? How do we look for good teachers? These are the things I would like to talk about.

First of all, we like to think of being able to get a teacher who has a broad educational background, who has lived in a rich environment, and who has lived to the fullest extent; also one with special training in either elementary education, early childhood education, or child development. And if she has had a major emphasis in these areas, we are probably going to get a person who has a fairly clear cut philosophy and understanding of children, of knowing when they have certain jobs of learning to do, what their tasks, their developmental tasks, are and approximately when to expect what.

There is a spread, there is a flexibility to what we're teaching about children today because we know that all children do not develop at the same rate of speed. I think perhaps that Dr. Mary Fisher, when she was doing her work at Vassar, did more for educators and for teachers than almost anyone because it was she who said, "A child walks between nine months and fifteen months. Don't get excited if your neighbor's child is walking at nine months and yours is not."

We want teachers who understand the picture of development. We want teachers who know and understand that children are normal and they're active, and know that children are curious and wanting to grow up. They are struggling to grow up, and they are wrestling with these tasks of learning that they have to do.

As an administrator, I have found that a person can look pretty good on paper, and I think "Oh, this is good training, good background." The next thing that is important to me is to write to the people given as references. You know administrators can be pretty crafty and cagy. Most of them sincerely want to give the person the benefit of the doubt. But sometimes in these applications you can read between the lines. Then you had better call people who have been given as references because you begin to detect things about people this way. You want to explore pretty fully when you are hiring a teacher. And you know the kind you're looking for.

I think the next thing is a personal interview. This

is really a must. I would never hire a teacher without seeing her. During this personal interview you can ask some very leading questions so that you have a very good idea what the basic philosophy of this person is. Is she warm when she responds to your questions about children? Does she have a twinkle in her eye when she gives an example of something she has experienced with children? How does she really feel about them? Is she flexible in her attitude? What kind of a program does she believe in directing? What kind of guidance does she give children? I think another good question that gives a good lead about her is: What kind of discipline do you believe in? There are all sorts of schools of thought on this. We have people who are too far to the right and too far to the left. To the far right in my opinion when they stand by and observe completely. There are times when we need to do something because we have these highly permissive areas, where children become dangerous to themselves. And we have some people who have been trained or have developed this philosophy, "You must not step in and interfere." Well, this is going pretty far out. Then we have people who are at the other extreme. And neither one would I want to hire.

Then I would want to know what the understanding of children is. This person should know what to expect and when, as I said before. One of our teachers had an experience the other day. I think she has a good understanding of children, and she is an excellent teacher. She has a little kindergarten boy who just dear. We had him two years in nursery school. He was going into the bathroom and she came by. He stopped and very earnestly leaned over and said, "But I can't read." He knew she was one of the kind teachers. And she said, "You can't read." And he said, "No, but I can tie." And she said, "Well, that's wonderful that you can tie, and you need to tie before you learn to read." And he said, "And I can snap my fingers and make a little noise like this." She said, "You should know how to snap your fingers before you learn to read." You see she sensed that someplace pressure had been brought to bear on this child that reading was very important. He was not living up to this; he hadn't got that far. He smiled and relaxed when he saw he was being accepted for what he could do. But the parting shot was this when she started to turn, "But I can't read." However, she had treated it, I think, very well. This shows that children do feel pressures and they need this acceptance of what they can do at a particular time.

I would like to offer from my own experience, three examples from three different levels. One from nursery school, one from kindergarten, and one from primary. One of our nursery school children during summer school was in the playground. He is a dear little fellow,

very spontaneous and this is the part that attracts you to him. As I came out on the playground he said, as he looked up with his bright open face, "Where you have been, Miss Thurston?" His mother happened to be standing there and she said, "Oh, no. You should say where were you, Miss Thurston?" I said, "Never mind. I understood what he meant." I didn't think he needed to be laden at that point with the correct usage of the English language. At three and a half his question was perfectly acceptable. We did not need to teach him at this particular point.

I recall of other experiences in kindergarten, and I believe that here we accept a little different level in language. I am sure that any of you who have taught kindergarten have had the experience of children coming in and saying, "Look what I brang to school." Ordinarily I would certainly recognize what they had brought and perhaps repeat, "This is wonderful that you brought this to school. This is a form of correction. First we accept. A very smooth form of correction is used; they all learn."

I recall an experience that I had with children in reading. This was on the first grade level. I was reading with a group of three children. They were pretty good; it was about the third or fourth month of the first grade, and they'd had enough instruction and experience in reading that they read rather fluently—two little girls and a boy. The boy was reading and he came to a sentence which started out, "I know so-and-so." Well, as you know, many words in our English language make no sense. I'm surprised that children learn this complicated process of reading. He said, "I..." and he looked at the word know, but nothing clicked. So I said, "k-no." He frowned and he got a little nearer this word. Finally he looked up at me with a hazy look in his eyes and he said, "Miss Thurson, I can't even pronounce the damn thing!"

## **SOLVING PROBLEMS COOPERATIVELY**

*Annie Butler, School of Education,  
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I've been sitting listening for the last two days and I've heard so many new ideas. Have you had any feelings? What can I do about this? Is there any way I can get some help? We need to think about it. We need to try something new. There are ways we can do this.

Last year I walked into a nursery school which wasn't really the type of nursery school that is typical. It didn't have a nice big playroom, with beautiful new furniture. In fact, it was in two rather small rooms,

Not only do we have to know what to expect at different levels, I think we have to know and recognize when something is above what we ordinarily think of as a level. I want to tell you about an experience that just happened in our nursery school with a child not quite three. This is a very, very high level of operation. He was a child who was in the sandbox. Little Brucie is well-adjusted in every respect. Another youngster who is not so well adjusted in his personal relationships was plastering Brucie's face with sand. Brucie was not crying which you would expect him to do. He sat there talking his way out of the situation. He was saying, "Don't you know this isn't the way you do a nursery school?" By now his face and clothes were plastered with sand. "It is not what you do to your friends," he said.

It is this kind of person, an understanding person, that we want with children, to live with them, enjoy them, and understand them. We hope to have teachers with at least a little experience. As my director says, you have to begin someplace, and I don't care whether you're taking a person fresh out of college or with twenty years of experience it's always a gamble to fit them into a particular situation. I think this is one thing that makes administrators keep their fingers crossed. Will everything work out?

Let me mention again the things we really look for. A good background of training, a person who has a sound philosophy of life who understands herself, as well as children. It is extremely important that you have a well-integrated personality. Another very important thing that I like to look for is a sense of humor. I want a person who can really laugh at her own mistakes and laugh and enjoy things with children. Above all, I look for a person who has a strong love of children.

and the equipment was old, but you could tell that the teacher had been using a lot of ingenious ideas. The children were working in the cooking area with all kinds of shrubs, which they called food. One youngster said, "You know, Mrs. Sanders, we need some water." I looked and here was a big tank, but no water in it. The teacher took a pitcher and poured some water into the top of the tank. The tank had a regular faucet which the children could turn on. This was controlled because there was no drain. She had to limit the amount the children could catch. Later I watched the children who were working over in the art area. I never saw such an unusual collection of materials which they had. The teacher began to pull them out of the closet later, collections of buttons, all shapes, sizes, and

colors, and materials you could buy or pick up in a grocery store or any place. I said to her, "This is one of the most creative programs I've ever seen. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what you've been doing."

She said, "I have been working with a group of people who had decided they wanted to study how they could make their programs more creative." This had grown out of an interest which appeared in the local organization of the nursery school association and was founded by that group. They found someone who knew more about this than they did and then they committed themselves to work with that person for a period of time and try out things later coming back and reporting what they had done and getting some help with things that did work and perhaps sharing with other people these ideas. She said, "This was to me one of the most rewarding things that I have done in a long, long time. It's been a lot of work, but the thing that I have done with the children has been worth everything that I have put into it."

Five-year-olds are really very anxious for a great deal of information. They want new information and they busy trying to figure out how to organize their information. In so doing they use practically all the reasoning and thinking processes that you or I may use. This has rather great implication for the kind of educational program that we devise for children of this age. We have many schools that rely heavily on the materials and upon the equipment that is available. Well, this doesn't say we need any less equipment, and it doesn't say we need any more, but it does say

we need something more. What are the answers when we have had some of these thought out? What are the ideas? How are we spending money? How can we gauge those ideas?

We often feel a little pressure but we don't know quite in which direction to move. Last year I had the privilege of working with a group of teachers. This was an organization, not a formal organization, of kindergarten teachers who met together. There was a committee of this group that was in charge of developing a curriculum improvement program. One of the things that they were doing was to identify some of their problems. Sometimes it's very hard to take a square look at ourselves. In other words, it's hard for us to be objective in looking at the type of experiences we have provided for children. One thing that can be done is to invite someone in to visit the classroom and talk with the teacher, forming an evaluation of that program. We all feel the need for help, and one of the important things we can do is to work out the way in which we can obtain this help, and how we can do it so we work continuously toward a solution of our problems. As we discover new ways of working, we are more able to discover additional new ways of working. In the long run this results in a more satisfactory program for children and in a more satisfying feeling on the teacher's part because the children are learning. This is a never ending process because if we've learned a little bit, we need to learn a little bit more. There is always more to be learned about children.



